


2-2000

MLGPA News (February 2000)

David Garrity

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MLGPA News

Advocacy for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Communities since 1984

P.O. Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347-0232

February 2000

LD 2239

What it does:

Prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodation and credit on the basis of sexual orientation.

Religious Exemption:

"a religious entity is exempt from these provisions." Religious entity is defined as a religious corporation, association or society, including a college, school, or educational institution or non-profit charitable organization if controlled, owned or supported by a religious corporation, association or society.

New State Contract Provision:

Any private entity, including religious non-profits, may be required by provision of state contract not to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation to receive state funds.

Definition of Sexual Orientation:

"Having a preference for heterosexuality, bisexuality or homosexuality, being identified with or having a history of that preference. Sexual orientation refers to a person's actual or perceived status, condition or gender expression."

Includes a Referendum:

Sends the bill, when enacted, out to be ratified by the voters in the November 2000 election.

This bill also contains specific statements to exclude or clarify what it doesn't do:

- ▼ Does not grant special rights to any person or group covered by the Human Rights Act
- ▼ Does not confer legislative approval to any person or group covered by the Act
- ▼ Does not endorse or cover sexual behavior
- ▼ Does not cover sexual attraction to a minor by an adult
- ▼ Does not require any school to promote or teach any sexuality or sexual orientation
- ▼ Does not establish any affirmative action based on sexual orientation
- ▼ Does not require or prohibit employers from providing domestic partnership benefits

Roman Catholic Church Supports Civil Rights Bill!

We're sure you've heard the news, and we hope you are as happy as we are. We've been overwhelmed by: the public enthusiasm of Roman Catholic Leaders, especially to the press; the strong, positive reaction of Legislators — we've picked up a few new votes already; and, the clear effect it's had already on voters we've met.

MLGPA is extremely grateful to Sen. Joel Abromson, to Rep. Michael Quint, co-sponsor of L.D. 2239, and Susan Farnsworth, MLGPA's Legislative Advocate, for their dedication to civil rights and for the exceptional efforts they all made to secure them for our community. For some time MLGPA had been seeking to discuss these issues with the Roman Catholic Church, but it was Sen. Abromson who brought everyone together last summer for the long series of talks that have produced this historic agreement.

First and foremost, this bill is, and has always been, about one thing — prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, credit and public accommodation based on a person's sexual orientation. Nothing in the proposed amendment will

alter that. Essentially we have further defined what this civil rights bill will and won't do. We think we've now removed all of the major questions and concerns of those who have not been able to support this measure in the past.

Just as this bill's original language makes it clear that it will grant no "special rights" to anyone, the amendment will make it clear that this bill prohibits discrimination based on one's sexual orientation, not one's sexual behavior, and expressly states that it excludes sexual attraction between a minor and an adult. The new definition will read: "Sexual orientation means having an orientation for heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality, having a history of that orientation or being identified with that orientation. Sexual orientation refers to a person's actual or perceived status, condition or gender expression and this chapter is not intended to endorse or extend to any form of sexual behavior and does not include sexual attraction to a minor by an adult."

The major concerns addressed are the religious exemption and

Continued on Page 4

**Hold
That
Date!**

**Annual MLGPA
Awards Banquet!**

Saturday, April 8th

We planning a victory party for the bill.
We've gotten so big we've had to move it to Portland.
More details to follow . . .

MLGPA

Advocacy for the Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual, and Transgendered
Communities since 1984

Executive Committee:

David Garrity
President
Maggie Allen
Vice President
Paul Alpert
Treasurer
Susan Sparaco
Secretary
Celeste Gosselin
Larry Bliss
Judy Edgerly

Board Members:

Ken Bartuka
Harold Booth
Marti Hagglund
Scott Hawkins
Ron Hersom
Paul Holbrook
Robin Lambert
Jeff L'Heureux
Virginia Slawson
Mark Sullivan

Board Associates:

Dal Maxwell
Richard Steinman

MLGPA Lobbyists:

Susan Farnsworth
Mary McPherson

Mailing Address:

PO Box 232
Hallowell, ME 04347-0232

e-mail:

mlgpa@javanet.com

Voice Mail:

1-800-556-5472
761-3732 (in Portland)

HAVE YOU EVER been the victim of discrimination? If so, we want to hear your story.

Help us show the Judiciary Committee that discrimination against Maine's Gay Men, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgendered is **REAL!**

We need volunteers from all parts of Maine to make phone calls or write letters. Call us right away if you want to help. And please ask your Legislator to vote YES!

Please contact the MLGPA Legislative Committee:

Chair Celeste Gosselin at 657-6092 or cgosselin@maine.rr.com;
Susan Farnsworth, MLGPA Lobbyist, at 626-3312 or farns@gwi.net; or
Mary McPherson, MLGPA Legislative Aide, at 677-6414 or
snowball@tidewater.net.

For more information: write: PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347,
e-mail: mlgpa@javanet.com, or voicemail: 800-55-MLGPA

Please Note the New Time and Place!!

PUBLIC HEARING:

LD 2239, An Act to Ensure Civil Rights and Prevent Discrimination

Wednesday, February 16 — 9:00am–1:00pm

Augusta State Armory, Western Avenue, Augusta

WE NEED YOU TO ATTEND!!

The Augusta Armory holds 900 people.
Help us have the most supporters there.

Important MCER Meeting

1–4pm, Sunday, February 13
Hammond Street Church, Bangor

Come and be a part of history! We will make decisions on our new executive committee and vote on its members!

Nominations are open to all. You need not be present to be nominated, but we will need something in writing to confirm that an absent nominee will serve. This is your chance to be a part of these important decisions. Be there if you care.

REGULAR MEETINGS

MLGPA Board meets 6:00-8:00 pm on the third Thursday of every month, downstairs at the Lithgow Library, at State & Winthrop Streets, Augusta. New members are always welcome. We are actively seeking new members and volunteers from all parts of Maine to help pass our civil rights bill NOW in the Legislature and in November's referendum. FMI: snail mail (PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347),

e-mail (mlgpa@javanet.com) or voicemail (761-3732 or 800/55-MLGPA).

MLGPA Legislative Committee meets 6:00-8:00 pm every Tuesday at the office of MLGPA Lobbyist Susan Farnsworth, 222 Water St. in Hallowell (directly in front of Lucky Gardens Restaurant). For directions or more info, please contact Susan at 626-3312 (farns@gwi.net) or Committee Chair Celeste Gosselin at 657-6092 (cgosselin@maine.rr.com).

More Legislative Issues Coming Up This Session!

As you may recall, during the last session MLGPA followed over thirty bills of concern to the LGBT and HIV/AIDS communities. In this session, though officially much shorter, the legislature will consider a number of bills that that we will want to actively support or oppose and some that we need to watch. The safer schools initiatives and issues related to HIV are, as usual, of gravest concern for us. But, increasingly, we have to screen seemingly unrelated or innocent looking bills as well, to protect against attack on free speech or privacy. These basic rights can easily be encumbered by bills seeking censorship or other restrictions on Internet use, for instance. We all need to be vigilant.

So far, I have identified the following bills of interest or concern to MLGPA scheduled for this legislative session:

CIVIL RIGHTS AND RELATED BILLS:

LD 1322, An Act to Ensure Civil Rights and Prevent Discrimination
LR 3407 An Act to Clarify the Maine Human Rights Act Regarding Compensation and Punitive Damages

LR 3466, An Act Concerning Offensive Names (Passamaquoddy bill re place names)

SAFE SCHOOLS BILLS:

LD 1305, An Act to Establish and Fund Conflict Resolution Education and Civil Rights Team Programs in the Public Schools

LD 1933, An Act to Promote Sharing of Information between Schools and Criminal Justice Agencies

BILLS RELATED TO HEALTH CARE OF GENERAL CONCERN:

LD 1322, An Act regarding Home-based Care

LD 1378, An Act regarding Access to Long Term Care Services for Persons with Dementia

LR 3636, An Act to Establish Fair Pricing for Prescription Drugs

LR 3537, An Act to Provide Medicaid Reimbursement for Hospice Care

LR 3641, An Act to Improve the Lives of People with Disabilities

BILLS RELATED TO CRIMINAL LAW OF GENERAL CONCERN:

LD 354, An Act to Establish Certain Crimes of Domestic Violence

LD 1583, An Act to Amend the Definition of Sex Offender (requiring Sheriffs to notify the State Bureau of Identification of a Sex Offender's Release from Jail for purposes of registration and notification)

LD 2069, An Act to Establish a Critical Incidents Review Panel regarding Use of Physical Force by Officers

INTERNET RELATED BILLS WHICH BEAR WATCHING:

LD 675, An Act to Amend Consumer Protection Laws with respect to Internet Services

LD 1094, An Act to Reduce Unsolicited Communications from the Internet

LD 1922, An Act to Establish the Maine Internet Policy Act

A WORD ABOUT THE STATE HOUSE ITSELF

This will be a year to "Be Kind" to your legislator, or "Y2BK", as I call it. When our legislators go back into session in January, they will find themselves in the middle of construction everywhere they look—a very trying situation. As some of you know, there is a massive renovation project underway at the Capitol complex. The entire State Office Building is still vacant and under repair as it has been for the past several months. The state agencies and offices which occupied its six floors are now dispersed all over Augusta, Chelsea, Hallowell and Gardiner.

The tunnel between the State Office Building and the State House has been removed and a new one is being built. There is no cafeteria, only the small snack bar in the basement of the State House. There is also very little parking anywhere near the State

House, AND, if that's not enough, the entire Senate half of the State House will still be sealed off and under construction when the legislature reconvenes in January.

As a result, many legislative committee meetings will be at sites scattered all around Augusta, some have yet to be announced. At present, the Appropriations Committee is planning to meet at the Oblate Retreat Center; the Education Committee, at the Armory; several at the Civic Center and other locations far from the State House. Only a few committees—Human Services, Judiciary, Natural Resources, and Veterans and Legal Affairs—are expected to stay (for the most part) in the State House.

Because of the ongoing construction, the full legislature is now scheduled to meet ONLY 3 days during January and ONLY 7 days in February. On these 10 days in January and February, I understand the Senate Chamber will be opened specially for these sessions, along with some space for the Senate Clerk. It is hoped that by March the Senate side will be ready for occupancy. In the meantime, I expect this to be a very difficult couple of months.

With so few legislative sessions scheduled in January and February, legislators may have more concentrated periods of time in committee. (All bills are supposed to be heard and out of committees by Friday, March 10.) Even if that is the case, communications, parking, eating, scheduling and transportation are all likely to be difficult and in a state of constant upheaval, so that just getting to one's committee and to hearings on one's own bills is going to be enormously challenging.

So I say to MLGPA members: Let's call this Y2BK! That is, as we begin the year 2000, *Let's be kind to our legislators*. They will be having a very difficult session!

Stay tuned!

— Susan Farnsworth

Roman Catholic Church Supports LD 2239!

Continued from Page 1

public funds, which proved to be the most difficult to resolve. There has always been a broad religious exemption in previous bills, but it was ambiguous as to who was exempt. The Church requested a clearer definition.

On one hand, while the Diocese has no intent to practice discrimination, it believes that subjecting its charitable organizations to state law would represent a breach of religious freedoms. The Diocese also thought they would be unable to track all of the benefits its various entities might receive — directly or indirectly — from one kind of public funding or another.

On the other hand, MLGPA is opposed to having state money for public services — gay people pay taxes, too — going to organizations that discriminate. In fact, in the first draft of this bill, new language was added to exempt only those religious organizations that did not receive public funds. And we could not accept excluding such major employers as Catholic Charities or Mercy Hospital from the law.

We were deadlocked over this issue until the Church made a new offer. They agreed that the state could require as a condition of its contracts that ALL organizations — including all religious organizations — agree not to discriminate. Because the state already includes nondiscrimination provisions in its contracts, we said yes. Most of the religious non-profit charitable corporations in Maine contract with the state to provide services.

WHY HAVE WE MADE THIS EFFORT?

The short answer is: To win passage in the legislature and on the ballot in November.

Let me start with a few of the considerations and assumptions we made going into this. WE LOST the People's Veto vote in 1998. That scares plenty of legislators, who don't want to be "overturning the voters." That leaves an impression in voters minds that this issue has already been de-

cided — we could expect to get backlash about that in the November 2000 vote on our civil rights.

Another referendum is a very serious proposition. If we don't win this one, it will be a long time — maybe 10 years — before we can even try again. So this is a make or break situation for us. The MLGPA Board made a very serious commitment to finding every coalition partner and every vote we can get. There are 1.2 million people in Maine, a quarter of them are Roman Catholic. With the support of the Diocese, we had a victory in 1995.

At our state meetings in Bangor many of our northern brothers and sisters made it clear that their issues are about personal safety, which may or may not be secured by law. They helped us understand that we need to change people's thinking, not just pass laws, if we want to produce real change. And when we talked to northern gay leaders, they told us that having the Catholic Church's support alone would make a big difference in people's lives. That's why we set out on

this course with the Roman Catholic Church more than a year ago.

Having the support of the Diocese makes a huge statement to legislators and the general public that this bill is different AND that it's okay. This isn't about the approval of the Roman Catholic Church or how many Catholics will support us; it's about having such a major institution change its position and support the bill. It sends a message that some people who were concerned about the bill before are okay with it now. That will reassure a great number of voters who have never understood what the bill was all about.

We wish to express our deepest appreciation to Bishop Joseph Gerry and his representatives, Marc Mutty, Father Michael Henschel and Michael Poulin for their respectful and sincere willingness to resolve the difficult and sometimes conflicting issues that separated us at the beginning of this process.

Legislative Alert!

The Legislature is considering LD 2239 NOW

Public Hearing before the Judiciary Committee on
LD 2239 at 9am, February 16, 2000
at the Augusta State Armory, Western Avenue, Augusta.

The vote in the Legislature will take place very soon. We need volunteers from all parts of Maine to make phone calls and write letters. Contact us right away if you're willing to help.

***Please call your legislator now!
Ask him or her to vote YES,
and plan to attend the Hearing.***

For more information: PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347
e-mail: mlgpa@javanet.com or
voicemail: 761-3732 or 800/55-MLGPA

MLGPA Awards Banquet Nomination Request

Maine Diversity Alliance, MLGPA's educational wing, is hosting a very special banquet this year on Saturday April 8, 2000 at Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland. Mark your calendar now. Each year we honor individuals and groups for their efforts in the struggle for LGBT equality. And we need your help in choosing who gets the awards.

This is going to be an incredibly hardworking year for all of Maine's Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexual & Transgendered People and Allies. Between now and this year's Awards Banquet we will be leading the effort to get our civil rights bill passed in the legislature and signed by the governor-hopefully for the very last time. Before we plunge into the referendum campaign to win again in November, let's take the time to CELEBRATE this success and honor ourselves and our friends for their contributions and achievements.

Please look over the award categories and let us know who you think should be recognized. Then fill in the Nomination Form on the back and send it in right away, we must have them by March 1st. Here are descriptions of the awards with the names of just a few of the many exceptional people and organizations we've recognized over the years:

- **Great Pioneer Award-** for an achievement that embodies bold new vision or courageous breakthrough in our struggle for equality. Recipients include Governor Angus King, Dale McCormick and Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center.
- **Larry Connolly Award-** for outstanding service by a Maine public official. Named in memory of one of the first sponsors of our anti-discrimination bill. Recipients include Gerald Talbot, Tom Andrews and Gerald Conley Jr.
- **Cameron Duncan Award-** for extraordinary accomplishment, commitment and service within the AIDS community. Named after Cameron Duncan, who openly shared his life and gave AIDS a face for the people of Maine. Past recipients include Frannie Peabody, Myles Rightmire, Tom Antonik and Peter Haffenreffer.
- **F.E. Pentlarge Award-** for exceptional work that upholds and promotes family within our community. Effie founded PFLAG in Maine and never stopped working for equal rights. Recipients include Sally and Eugene Debor, Mare and Laurie Wallace, Peter Rees and Effie.
- **Media Award-** for exceptional print or broadcast reporting and commentary on LGBT and civil rights issues. Recipients include Bill Nemitz, Maine Public Radio and Maine Times.
- **Community Service Award-** for those who provide outstanding direct service to the community. Recipients include Paula Stockholm, MWD volunteers, Karen Geraghty, Lin Gould, Laura Fortman, Jim Neal and Roger Mayo, Mary Harney, Rev. Fred Lipp, Catherine Kidman, and Northern Lambda Nord.
- **Youth in Leadership Award-** for a youth leader (24 years of age or younger) in recognition of contributions to the broader LGBT community at large. First presented last year to the Gay/Straight Alliance of Mt. Desert High School.

Please return this form by March 1st. Copy this form or request additional by leaving word on MLGPA's voice mail at (207) 761-3732. Please leave your name, address, and phone number and email, and be sure to tell us that you want a nomination form. Thank you.

MAIL TO :Maine Diversity Alliance EMAIL: sueandmaggi@clinic.net
P.O. Box 1951 Portland, ME 04104

MLGPA 2000 Award Nomination Form

The award you want your nominee to receive:

Name, address, and phone number of person/organization you are nominating:

Why your nominee should receive this award (use separate paper if necessary):

Names and phone numbers of others who support or know the work of your nominee.

Do you whether or not your nominee has received an MLGPA award?

Your name, address and phone number so that we can reach you with any questions.

The deadline for nominations is **March 1, 2000** -Please do it today!

MAIL TO : Maine Diversity Alliance
P.O. Box 1951 Portland, ME 04104

EMAIL: sueandmaggi@clinic.net

Please Note the New Time and Place!!

PUBLIC HEARING:
**LD 2239 An Act to Ensure Civil Rights
and Prevent Discrimination**

Wednesday, February 16, 9:00am–1:00pm
the Armory, Western Ave, Augusta

WE NEED YOU TO ATTEND!!

The Augusta Armory holds 900 people
Help us have the most supporters there

Have you ever been the victim of discrimination?

**If so, we want to hear your story. Help us show the
Judiciary Committee that discrimination against Maine's
Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexuals & Transgendered is REAL!**

**We need volunteers from all parts of Maine to make phone
calls or write letters. Call us right away if you want to help.
And please be sure to ask your legislator to vote YES.**

Please contact the MLGPA Legislative Committee:

Mary McPherson, 677-6414 or snowball@tidewater.net

FMI: snail mail (POBox 232, Hallowell, ME 04347),

email (mlgpa@javanet.com) or voicemail (800/55-MLGPA).

Minutes of the Meeting of the MLGPA Board

December 16, 1999

Attendance: Robin Lambert, Ken Bartuka, Ron Hersom, Larry Bliss, Howard Booth. Susan Farnsworth, David Garrity, Celeste Gosselin, Maggie Allen, Mary McPherson, Susan Sparaco, Judy Edgerly, Paul Alpert

Minutes: Minutes of the November meeting approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance: Paul reported the cash balance in the MLGPA account. David reported that Scott was preparing a proposed budget.

Membership: David reported on the status of renewal notices. David also requested volunteers to study and make recommendations regarding our database database needs. Paul and Maggie volunteered.

Fundraising: Larry reported that the fundraising letter was mailed but that a number of letters have been returned because of outdated addresses. He urged everyone to put forth names of potential major donors. Robin discussed his and Ken's fundraising plans for Ogunquit. Maggie provided a plan and led a discussion for conducting follow-up phone calls.

Legislative: Celeste provided an update on the legislative polling regarding the bill. Ron discussed plans for the "religious lobby day." Susan updated the Board regarding the negotiation with the Diocese.

CAMPAIGN TRAINING:

David reported on interviews and selection of candidates for the training.

OUTREACH:

Board members were encouraged to attend the upcoming event for Martin Luther King day sponsored by the NAACP.

MCER NEWS:

An interim executive committee has been appointed and is searching for a fundraiser. County and local groups are being developed.

DISCUSSION:

The Board held a lengthy discussion regarding the negotiations with the Diocese for the purpose of providing Susan and David with direction on the position to be taken on behalf of the organization. A motion was passed to empower the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the Board until the next Board meeting.

Because of time constraints, the Board agreed that discussion regarding the rest of the agenda (MLGPA's role and responsibilities for the upcoming year and a review of its objectives) should be tabled until the January meeting. So that extra time may be allotted for that discussion, the Board agreed to commence the Jan. 20 meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Adjourned.

Campaign Leadership Training

Thirty-one people from across Maine gathered in Augusta in January for an intensive three-and-a-half-day training in campaign skills. Attendees included State Treasurer Dale McCormick, Legislators Judy Powers and Scott Cowger, Laura Fortman of the Maine's Women's Lobby, Naomi Falcone of the Maine Rural Network, as well as many members of the Maine Coalition for Equal Rights and MLGPA board members Ron Hersom, Ken Bartuka, and David Garrity, and lobbyist Susan Farnsworth. We were all there with one goal in mind, to learn how to run a grassroots campaign so that we can win equal rights for gay people at the polls next November. Some of us had been meeting since soon after our defeat in the last referendum, but there were just as many new faces, people for whom the training was their introduction to our effort.

The weekend was hosted by the Maine Diversity Alliance, the educational wing of MLGPA, and co-sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) Policy Institute and endorsed by the Maine Coalition for Equal Rights (MCER). Because our generous contributors underwrote much of the expense through the Diversity Alliance and the NGLTF Policy Institute provided weeks of Dave Fleischer's time in planning the training, organizing and working with us on the candidate search and interviews, no one was charged tuition. However, all participants were asked to pledge to use the skills they learned to make an in-kind contribution to the upcoming campaign or other good cause. People could agree to raise \$1000, identify 250 "yes" voters or recruit a 5+50 volunteer and leadership team.

There were two major focuses of the training: how to identify the voters who support us, and how to build the team of volunteers to do it. And we started even before the training began. Each of us was asked to make a list of everyone we know who we could ask to do more than just vote for equal rights. We called these our "homework lists," and when we added up all of our names

we had approximately 11,000. That's not a typo, eleven thousand. Allowing for half of them to be duplicates, the total is still an impressive 5500. Not a bad start. We're already putting all our lists together and we'll be using them soon as we begin looking for our volunteers and donors.

The training team was impressive. Dave Fleischer from NGLTF Policy Institute, who led the group, has had years of experience running trainings all across the country for the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund. Liz Kaufman, campaign manager and consultant, has been active in 39 different referenda campaigns in Oregon, including most of the anti-gay ones. Grant Martin, from Houston, has managed such successful campaigns as Anise Parker's, now the openly lesbian city councilor of Houston. And Paul Getsos, from NYC, a longtime community organizer for low income women, labor and Latino groups. Each, though different in background, style and experience, added their own unique skills and vision.

We learned what we should do as well as what we shouldn't — and why:

- ▼ Develop a comprehensive campaign plan with a realistic timeline, budget and fundraising plan. These plans have to include concrete weekly goals, so that everyone will know where the campaign should be, where it is and where it is going.
- ▼ Determine the number of votes needed to win. Divide the expected turnout in half and add one. This tells you how many voters you need to reach as well as how many volunteers you'll need to reach them. This makes the result seem realistic.
- ▼ Recruit volunteers. Volunteers are the lifeblood of any grassroots campaign. Each volunteer needs to feel needed and valued. When recruiting, it is vital to determine what the volunteer can do and more importantly what the volunteer wants to do.
- ▼ Voter ID. One of the most important tasks is to identify the voters who support you as well as those who do not. To do this, you must ASK each voter either in person during door to

door canvassing or on the phone. By knowing this, you where to concentrate your resources thus saving time and money as well as volunteer burnout.

- ▼ GOTV, Get Out the Vote. These are the calls and postcards to your supporters in the last days before the election reminding them to vote. If they don't vote, all your other work is worthless.

At the end of the training, the we agreed on what is important to us in this campaign and what we are committed to achieve. We talked about everything from health insurance for staff to our very core ideals. Here's what we decided:

- ▼ Ethical Campaign: This will be a statewide grassroots campaign open and respectful of all.
- ▼ Community Building: It can be a lasting legacy of this campaign that we have a healthy, united community when the election is over and equal rights are won.
- ▼ Use the words Gay and Lesbian: We were pleasantly surprised when we did as we went canvassing door to door on Saturday morning in Augusta and Gardiner. All but the most hardened bigots were polite, and many people mentioned the support we just received from the Roman Catholic Church.

When we finished late Sunday afternoon, we had finished the first drafts of a county plan, a statewide plan and a detailed plan for the first sixty days. We formed one committee to write the second drafts, another to search for a campaign manager, a local Bangor group. People signed up for such duties as: voter list development, voter ID coordination, communications, fund raising, volunteer recruitment and a grassroots committee to help towns and counties get started. We are underway!

The weekend was full of information, hard work, good spirit and energy. There will be more trainings this spring and many opportunities for everyone to become involved. Come join with this energetic group and let's win equal rights this November!

Calendar of Events

For more current information check out the Maine Gaynet Calendar at <http://www.huntcal.com/cgi/calview.cgi/GayNet/Events>

February 5, Saturday, 1:00–4:00pm

MCER Coordinating Committee meeting at the office of Susan Farnsworth, 222 Water St., Hallowell (in front of Lucky Garden). For directions or info, contact Susan at 626-3312 (farns@gwi.net) MCER is planning the next referendum campaign and supporting the development of local campaign teams in every county. Everyone is welcome: find out what's going on!

February 5, Saturday, 5:00pm

SOLO (Single Older Lesbians Organization) POTLUCK, Durham Quaker Meeting House. Doors open at 5 PM; we eat about 6 PM. FMI: footloos@gwi.net

February 5, Saturday, 7:30pm

FORUM: Weaving Our Histories Through Our Community. Speakers include Leslie Feinberg (Stone Butch Blues), Erica Rand (Bates College), PJ Mears (Yankee Boyz & Maine Gender Resource and Support Service), Martha Palmer (P-FLAG) and singer/songwriter, Carole Wise. It's free! Creative Photographic Arts Center of Maine (4th floor, Bates Mill Complex in Lewiston). Brought to you by the Diversity Project of the AIDS Coalition of Lewiston-Auburn, to promote community building and well-being for LGBT men, women, and young people. FMI: Sean or Julia 786-4697 or diversityproj@hotmail.com.

February 8, Tuesday, 6:00–8:00pm &

February 15, Tuesday, 6:00–8:00pm

MLGPA Legislative Committee meeting at the office of MLGPA Lobbyist Susan Farnsworth, 222 Water St. in Hallowell (directly in front of Lucky Garden Restaurant). For directions or info, contact Susan, 626-3312 (farns@gwi.net) or Committee Chair Celeste Gosselin, 657-6092 (cgosselin@maine.rr.com).

February 16, Wednesday, 9:00am

Public Hearing on Civil Rights!!! New Time, New Place!!! L.D. 2239, An Act

to Ensure Civil Rights and Prevent Discrimination, the new anti-discrimination bill, is coming before the Judiciary Committee at the Augusta Armory. We hope that this will be the very last time we have to do this. Please come and be part of this historic event. The hall holds 900 people, so WE NEED YOU there to outnumber our opponents.

February 17, Thursday, 6:00–8:00pm

MLGPA MONTHLY BOARD MEETING. MLGPA meets every third Thursday of the month downstairs at the Lithgow Library, at State & Winthrop Streets, Augusta. New members are always welcome. We are actively seeking new members and volunteers from all parts of Maine to help pass our civil rights bill NOW in the Legislature and in November's referendum. For more information: snail mail (PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347), e-mail (mlgpa@javanet.com) or voicemail (761-3732 or 800/55-MLGPA).

February 21, Monday, 6:30pm

Out on MDI Potluck — Our monthly potluck is held on the third Monday of each month at a different member's home. All are welcome! See the OOMDI web site for details.

February 22, Tuesday, 6:00–8:00pm &

February 29, Tuesday, 6:00–8:00pm

MLGPA Legislative Committee meeting at the office of MLGPA Lobbyist Susan Farnsworth, 222 Water St. in Hallowell (directly in front of Lucky Garden Restaurant). For directions or more info, please contact Susan at 626-3312 (farns@gwi.net) or Committee Chair Celeste Gosselin at 657-6092 (cgosselin@maine.rr.com).

Regularly Scheduled Events

Every Monday, 8:00–9:00pm

The Rainbow Educational Alliance of Diverse Individuals meets in the basement of the UMF Computer Center room 006 to raise awareness on campus, do educational projects, and socialize (despite common belief). <http://violet.umf.maine.edu/~readi>

First & Third Mondays, 6:00pm

GAY MEN'S POTLUCK meets at the First Universalist Church, 169 Pleasant

St., in Auburn. For more info: 783-0461.

Every Thursday, 7:30–9:00pm

Gay-OK! of Greater Farmington/Franklin County meets in the rear of the psychology building (62 High St.) at the UMF campus. This social/support group is open to campus and community members and meets weekly when classes are in session. Contact Brian Kaufman at 778-7379 for more information.

OUTRIGHT offers support and safe space for GLBT youth 22 and under. There are groups in Belfast, Portland, Brunswick, Ellsworth . . . all over Maine. Most meet weekly or biweekly. For meeting times and contact info, see GayNet's OUTRIGHT calendar <<http://www.huntcal.com/cgi-local/calview.cgi/GayNet/Outright/>>

COASTAL OUTRIGHT For meeting location and/or more info, please call the Coastal AIDS Network in Belfast at 338-6330 or 1-800-207-4064 or e-mail can@acadia.net (Please type "Coastal Outright" in the subject line.) www.acadia.net/wkacAIDS/

MIDCOAST OUTRIGHT meets 7:00–9:00pm on the 2nd and 4th Friday of every month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick, located at 15 Pleasant Street. Midcoast Outright is a program of Merrymeeting AIDS Support Services. FMI call us at 729-8747.

OUTRIGHT OF LEWISTON-AUBURN currently meets every Friday evening 6:00–8:30pm. Contact Nancy at 786-2717 or outright_la@hotmail.com.

PORTLAND OUTRIGHT has meetings every Friday, 7:30–9:30pm and its drop-in center is open every Tuesday, 6:00–9:00pm in The Cinamon Building, 1 Pleasant St., 4th floor (above Hi Bombay). Local: 828-6560, toll-free: 1-888-567-7600.

CENTRAL MAINE OUTRIGHT: Drop-in center, 7–9pm every Thursday night, 11 King St., Augusta (off State St. near Pat's Pizza). Area youth (22 and under) invited; youth leaders and trained adult advisors will be there. Call 621-6393 with any questions, or mark.griswold@state.me.us.